

# Pelican Women's Championship

Sunday, November 14, 2021

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

## Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us in the media center at the Pelican Women's Championship presented by Konica Minolta and Raymond James.

We are joined by the 2021 champion, the Fresh Princess of Belleair, Nelly Korda.

NELLY KORDA: (Laughing.) Wow.

**Q. I've been waiting all week for that one. Nelly, you gave me the fun version of what was going through your mind on 17. Take me through the version that you can share with everybody.**

NELLY KORDA: The real version or like the PG version?

**Q. Exactly.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, kind of got unlucky that it went all the way down. I honestly had no shot. It was -- I like looked at it and I'm like, Well, okay. Have fun, Nelly.

But I honestly lost hope. I was like, Okay, just try to make a solid par; 18 is a really tough hole. If you have a chance for birdie, then try and go after it.

But my caddie really kept me in my head, in the moment, and I didn't give up.

Thank God I didn't.

**Q. What did Jason say to you?**

NELLY KORDA: To think positive thoughts. (Laughter.) He's like, I want you to take this one minute and just think positive thoughts; no negativity.

**Q. That's good.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. He's got your back all the time. We can tell that on the course.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, always.

**Q. You hit a nice approach shot into 18; buried about a 21-footer. Same one in the playoff on No. 18. What was going through your mind the first time? Ice in your veins you proved.**

NELLY KORDA: Honestly I wasn't that nervous over the first one for birdie. I was just like, Okay, just try to give it your best shot and see what happens. I mean, Lexi still had I think a four- or five-footer. They're not easy, the left to righters.

But I was just kind of -- honestly I was just pretty happy with the putt I had. I just tried to keep it really light. I wasn't that nervous. I was just like, okay, just whack it in there. That was my kind of demeanor going into that one.

In the playoff I had kind of the same putt, maybe a little bit more to the right. It was a little straighter, I think a little further away. I knew that it was breaking left to right, and I just picked a spot on the green and rolled it over it.

**Q. Going back to earlier in the round, what did it feel like there? Because for a while seemed like a two-player race there. What was the atmosphere like, the battle between you and Lexi?**

NELLY KORDA: It was a heated battle. I actually really enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun. We were still kind of smiling and joking together and talking, so it was nice.

But she definitely kept me on my toes, and I guess did I as well with her. She played some solid golf. Unfortunate on 17, 18. I mean, 17 there were a lot of spike marks around the hole, so I don't know if she hit one to three-putt, but, yeah, that's how golf is sometimes.

You're going to lose these and sometimes you're going to win them.

**Q. How did you shake off the short putt there on 17? Then you only had two more putts, two holes.**



NELLY KORDA: The short putt wasn't even anything anymore. It was just the whole entire hole honestly. It was like, Okay, I need to get off this hole. I told Jason, Thank God we're not playing 17 in the playoff. I just tried to shake it off. I was pretty upset.

There was definitely some R rated words going through my head and probably out of my mouth. Nice thing about Jason is I can kind of vent to him and he takes it. It's not directed at him. It's just I can vent and get it all out, and then I can focus up. He tells me positive thoughts now that everything is out in the air, and go after it.

**Q. When you look at the season as a whole what goes through your mind? Four wins on the LPGA and a gold medal and one more to go. You've leapt in front of Jin Young in the Player of the Year race. How does it feel, your position?**

NELLY KORDA: It doesn't even feel like a season. I feel like it's two seasons. I feel like Lake Nona was a couple years ago now. It's crazy.

Yeah, I took a couple breaks after Solheim so I was never really in the flow of like competition golf. I didn't really expect much going into this week. I guess that should be my attitude every week, and just kind of have fun out there.

I tried to take the demeanor of like if I missed a putt, which there were a lot this week, just to kind of shake it off and see if I can do it the next hole.

So I just tried to keep it really light and easy because I hadn't played in a while, and there was expectations, a lot of talk. My body definitely needed the break, so I'm happy that I did take it.

Golf, it's a crazy sport sometimes.

**Q. You've won a lot of awards, a lot accolades that mean a lot. Can you kind of summarize if this one is any different? I mean, the fact that it is a hometown tournament in a way for you, and it probably doesn't measure up as much as gold medal in a way, but in a sense that it is home for you, you're able to have your family here and having fans?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it's so nice. I mean, I never won in front of my parents until earlier this year and I did it twice now, and in a playoff. My dad said I'm going to give him a heart attack, so that was nice before the playoff. I was like, Okay, good.

People keep forgetting that I won a major. People mention

my gold medal, which obviously is so meaningful. Comes every four years. You know, but winning a major, getting to world No. 1, and winning a gold medal, and on top of it winning three other events, it's been crazy.

I've put in a lot of work, but mentally being in these positions and playing week in, week out under the pressure definitely takes a toll on you. So I was very happy to take couple weeks off and to kind of get back on the ground and, you know, enjoy life a little bit, just be mellow.

But, yeah, this year has been crazy.

**Q. And then just kind of going back to the transition from 17 to 18, do you feel like you have a good hold on yourself in terms of being able to reset your mental sphere, especially going into the playoff not getting to high, saying even keel?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, you didn't want to know what I was saying from the 18 tee box to the 18 iron shot. Yeah, didn't really want to hear that walkup because I was definitely venting. There was definitely F bombs flying around just here and there.

As I said, I think it was good that I kind of got it out, that anger out, because I was very angry after 17. I thought I lost it there. I was like, Okay, I just gave it to Lexi in a sense.

But, yeah, I mean, it's a crazy game and I never give up. Even though I say I think I lost hope, I will never give up. I'll go down fighting every single time.

**Q. We talked earlier this week about you stepping it up and being competitive at all moments. When you are angry like that, do you find another gear again?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. Well, it's really funny, because when I used to play against my dad when I was younger he would always try to piss me off because he always said that I step it up a notch when I'm pissed.

So I guess, maybe. I was fuming though from that walk.

**Q. Can you tell us, give is an example of that? What would he do?**

NELLY KORDA: He would just be a smart ass. Because he was good and it was always so close, and I would always pay -- like we would play for money and he would always try to tick me off, and it worked a lot.

Megan Khang and I played with my dad at Conception I think Sunday before this event and he was playing really

good. He was starting to smack talk and I was just like, Okay, get out of here. I don't want to play with you anymore. You get me so fired up.

So I guess. I mean, I don't really like to be fired up. I like to keep it pretty mellow out there. But, I don't know.

**Q. He's got years of experience.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean tennis and golf are very different. You live to be amped up in tennis, while golf you're like, Okay, I need to calm down for my shot.

**Q. I just want to know, having just heard that story, how the partnership will be at the PNC?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I told him it's my off-season, so he better start grinding. (Laughter.) I'm a like, You're carrying the team here.

Yeah, I think it'll be a lot of fun. Actually Jason used to live in Orlando and play out at that golf course so he knows the golf course. I don't really know what the format it is. I it's best ball, but I don't know if it changes two days, Saturday, Sunday.

I think it'll be --

**Q. I think it's scramble.**

NELLY KORDA: Is it scramble?

**Q. I think so, but I could be wrong.**

NELLY KORDA: I don't know. Yeah, I mean, I don't know, but I think it'll be super fun. It'll be another kind of experience that we get to share together.

**Q. We talked yesterday about you winning four times, the potential, it happened, the winningest American on the LPGA Tour since Stacy Lewis in 2012. You talked about what Stacy has meant to you. What has she provided in terms of inspiration from the Solheims to just traveling every week on tour together? What has she meant to you?**

NELLY KORDA: Well, Chesnee is amazing. No, Stacy is really great. As I said, I think in Gleneagles Solheim I kind of got to know her, and this Solheim I really got to know her. She was our pod leader. I love her demeanor, how much she cares and fights.

I played with her again in the first few rounds in New Jersey, and I just enjoy being around Stacy so much. I love her fight. I know that she never backs down. I kind of

glimpsed over and she texted me and said, Great fighting, so she definitely means a lot.

**Q. Over that one minute where you had to think positive thoughts, what in particular were you thinking about?**

NELLY KORDA: I was just thinking about the putts I made and not missed. That's what I was thinking about.

I think particularly No. 6. I made that right-to-left birdie putt, so I just thought about that, just seeing the ball go in the hole.

**Q. And you mentioned you feel like this season has been multiple years. What's the biggest growth that you've seen within yourself over this what feels like multi-year season?**

NELLY KORDA: Good question. I think mentally I feel like I've just learned more about myself. I also learned to take some time off and step away from the game, because I was burnt out after Solheim and mentally so fatigued.

I think I just learned more about myself and what I need to do possibly going into the upcoming seasons.

**Q. You mentioned earlier that a lot of people seem to forget your major. How would you rank your accomplishments this year?**

NELLY KORDA: Would I rank each and every one?

**Q. Yeah, number one, gold medal, major, in terms of what they mean to you.**

NELLY KORDA: I think the major was the hardest because it was back-to-back events. It was my first major and that's what I wanted for so, so long. Growing up I didn't look up and think, Okay, I want to play in the Olympics. I want to play golf. I want to win a gold medal. It was, I want to win a major. This is what I want.

So that one definitely ranks really high up.

But the gold medal, you know, comes once every four years. It's such an honor to stand on that podium in front of the flag and put your hand across your chest. I had chills go through my entire body and I got really, really emotional.

Thankfully I had the mask.

But, yeah, I always say that every event has a different meaning and every event has a special meaning to me, but

obviously my first major, the gold medal, winning in front of my parents for the first time in Nona, coming back, having all these expectations on me, not playing for a while, winning here, winning at Meijer after missing the cut at the U.S. Open, being so down.

I think every one of those wins has a special meaning.

**Q. I got two more. In 2016 you won late in the Symetra Tour season to climb into the top 10 and earn membership for your 2017 rookie year on the LPGA Tour. Obviously there is a lot different about you. What's something in the statistics that is different about you that we just don't know about that has got you to this point?**

NELLY KORDA: I feel like I am way more consistent with my irons. I feel like I'm a very aggressive player and I think my irons are -- everyone always asks me what the best part my game is and I never want to say one thing. I have to say my iron play definitely ranks on top. I think I've just dialed it went in past couple years.

I think I've handled -- grown as a player where I've handled the situations of being under pressure a lot more. I mean, I loved my year on Symetra. It was a very hard year. I recommend it for everyone because you learn so much about yourself traveling week in and week out.

Like the year before that I was a junior golfer and playing seven events a year. I would go for a couple days to a tournament and then come back and see my coach. Like this, I played three, four events in a row which every shot meant so much, and I just feel like over the years I've learned more and more and more about myself, what I like, what I don't like, what works, and what doesn't.

And I still do. I'm going to be learning until I'm done.

**Q. You saw the blue blazers out there with the numbers. How cool of a tradition? I know there's different tournament that has a tradition similar, but how cool of a tradition --**

NELLY KORDA: Green, blue. It's really cool. This club is super special and the Doyles have done a really good job with hosting this event, kind of bringing in the community for this event.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Thank you, Nelly, congratulations.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

